

In the Claims:

Please withdraw Claims 1-3. Also, please note that Claims 22-29 are also withdrawn, as instructed by the Examiner. However, it is requested that new Claims 30-37 be considered for rejoinder as a result of amendment of Claim 22 (to new Claim 30), as detailed below. Please add Claims 30-37 as follows (editing marks are provided to show differentiation from Claim 22):

30. (New) A method for making a carefully controlled incision at an catheter entry site, wherein a guide wire has been inserted preparatory to introducing a catheter, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a guide-wire steered scalpel, said scalpel comprising:

a housing comprising a pathway having an entry portal and an exit portal through which a guide-wire is threadably disposed to facilitate steering the housing to the entry site, the entry portal adjoining the entry site when the scalpel is used;

a split scalpel blade, having two sharpened blades and associated points, which is disposed within the housing and aligned with the pathway to lance at the entry site, said blade being extended from the housing

to thereby produce an incision having a predetermined width and depth; and

an actuator comprising at least one blade interfacing part by which the scalpel blade is manually displaced relative to the housing and pathway to cause the blade to lance;

(b) displacing a guide-wire which has been previously inserted into an entry site through the entry and exit portals, respectively;

(c) displacing the housing along the guide-wire to the entry site; and

(d) actuating the scalpel blade to pierce the entry site to a predetermined depth and to a predetermined width.

31. (New) A method according to Claim 30 wherein step d comprises two separate steps as follows:

(e) extending the scalpel blade from the housing to produce an incision to the predetermined depth; and

(f) a second mode whereby the scalpel blade is split apart to widen the incision to a predetermined width.

32. (New) A method according to Claim 31 wherein transition from the first mode to the second mode is continuous and subliminal to a user actuating the scalpel.

33. (New) A method according to Claim 30 comprising a further step of retracting the scalpel blade into the housing at the end of the actuating step.

34. (New) A method according to Claim 33 wherein the actuating step comprises a step which stores energy in an elastic memory device.

35. (New) A method according to Claim 34 comprising an additional step of automatically retracting the scalpel blade into the housing due to release of energy stored in the elastic memory device at the end of the actuating step.

36. (New) A method according to Claim 33 wherein the scalpel blade retracting step comprises the following steps:

(g) returning the two scalpel blades to an original juxtaposed state; and

(h) retracting the entire scalpel blade into the housing.

37. (New) A method according to Claim 36 wherein step h occurs following completion of step g.